



## News from the Office of Erie County Executive Chris Collins

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### **Collins Unveils 2010 Budget with No Property Tax Rate Increase**

*Fiscally sound proposal now goes before Legislature*

Erie County Executive Chris Collins is proposing a 2010 County Budget with no increase in the property tax rate. The \$1 billion plus Budget includes an estimate of sales tax growth of 2% in 2010 from the anticipated 5% drop in 2009. The Budget also eliminates 209 positions and continues the transfer of non-mandated programs.

"There is no responsibility I take more seriously as County Executive than the careful stewardship of County finances," said Erie County Executive Chris Collins. "This Budget is transparent, honest and conservative. My Administration has crafted the 2010 Budget with the same prudent fiscal management that achieved a nearly \$13 million surplus in 2008. And to date, we are on track to end 2009 with a multi-million dollar surplus."

#### **Highlights of the 2010 Proposed Budget include:**

- **No property tax rate increase,**
- **0.2% spending increase,**
- **Millions in savings from Lean Six Sigma and Space Utilization initiatives,**
- **Transfer of non-mandated programs to local providers or back to NYS,**
- **Reduction of 209 positions (transfer of non-mandated programs & City parks),**
- **Increase in Convention & Visitors Bureau funding,**
- **\$77 million Capital program for road, bridge and other critical infrastructure projects,**
- **No raises for Commissioners or Deputy Commissioners.**

"This Budget proposal comes as our local economy, as well as the nation, continues to deal with the fallout of the most serious economic recession since the Great Depression," said Collins. "As forecasted in the 2009 Budget, the recession has led to a 5% drop in local sales tax revenue through July. The drop in sales tax is being cushioned by Federal stimulus dollars allocated to help county governments continue to provide and deliver various programs critical to county residents. My Administration is using this funding as it was intended and will continue to refuse to spend the funding on new programs and initiatives as some would suggest."

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Collins' Proposed Budget also continues to transfer non-mandated grants and programs back to New York State or local providers. This Budget includes the already completed transfer of Women, Infants & Children (WIC), and the upcoming transfer of Day Care Registration and non-mandated Clinical Services.

"My management team has been reviewing all non-mandated health and social service programs currently provided by Erie County in our ongoing effort to streamline County government and reduce our unfunded liabilities," said Collins. "It is my strong belief that Erie County should not be competing with local not-for-profit or community organizations that have the expertise, ability and willingness to provide these services to County residents."

In addition, while many of these services are reimbursed by state and federal grants, the County does accrue ancillary costs and is responsible for retiree health benefits for employees servicing these programs.

Collins' proposal also includes budgeted increases for union employees in line with new contracts that help to eliminate the County's staggering retiree health care obligations.

The County Executive will submit his Proposed Budget today to the Erie County Legislature. The Legislature must pass a balanced budget in December.

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